

the predetermined plurality of video cameras in proportion to the number of times counted by said counting device.

19. (Amended) A camera control system comprising:

a control device adapted to control a video camera;

an automatic control device adapted to execute automatic control of the video camera if a control command for the video camera is not received from a computer terminal;

a plurality of computer terminals for enabling said control device to output the control command for the video camera via a network; and

said video camera controlled by said control device.

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-19 have been amended. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of changes made to the claims by this Amendment. This marked-up version has been entitled "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made."

The Examiner has rejected applicants' claims 1-55 under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by the Suzuki, et al. patent.

In order to avoid this rejection, applicants intend to rely on the filing date (July 23, 1997) of applicants' priority application, i.e., Japanese Patent Application No. Hei 09-197020. This date predates the filing date (November 19, 1997) of the Suzuki, et al. patent. Accordingly, the Suzuki, et al. patent is not a valid reference against the subject application and the Examiner's rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

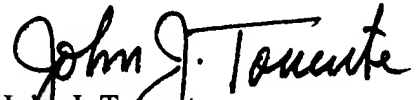
Applicants have enclosed a certified translation of the aforementioned priority document. Applicants also will be forwarding shortly a certified copy of such priority document in order to perfect applicants' claim of priority.

Reconsideration of the claims and passage of same to issue is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

In the Claims

Amend claims 1-6 and 8-19 as follows:

1. (Amended) A camera control system capable of controlling a video camera from a plurality of computer terminals via a network, comprising:

a video transmitting device adapted to transmit image signals obtained by the video camera;

a control [means for controlling] device adapted to control the video camera on the basis of a control command from one of the plurality of computer terminals; and

[automatic] wherein said control [means for executing] device executes automatic control of the video camera if the control command for the video camera is not received from any of the plurality of computer terminals.

2. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the video camera if the control command is not received for a predetermined time period.

3. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, [further comprising: video transmitting means for transmitting a video image of the video camera in response to a request from each of the plurality of computer terminals,]

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device stops automatic control of the video camera if the video image of the video camera is not outputted [from] by said video transmitting [means] device.

4. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an issuing [means for issuing] device adapted to issue a control right of the video camera to one of the plurality of computer terminals which makes a request to acquire the control right of the video camera which is required for said control means to control the video camera,

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the video camera if the control right of the video camera is not issued to any of the plurality of computer terminals by said issuing [means] device.

5. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 4, wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the video camera if a predetermined time period elapses after the control right of the video camera is released.

6. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 4, further comprising:

video transmitting [means for transmitting] device adapted to transmit a video image of the video camera in response to a request from each of the plurality of computer terminals,

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device stops automatic control of the video camera if the video image of the video camera is not outputted from said video transmitting [means] device to any computer terminal other than the computer terminal to which the control right of the video camera is issued.

Amend claims 8-19 as follows:

8. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 7, wherein said automatic control [means] device executes automatic control of the predetermined plurality of video cameras if the control rights of the predetermined plurality of video cameras are not issued to any of the computer terminals by said issuing [means] device.

9. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 7, wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the predetermined plurality of video cameras excluding a video camera whose control right is received, if the control rights of the predetermined plurality of video cameras are issued to one computer terminal by said issuing [means] device.

10. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 7, wherein said automatic control [means] device executes automatic control of video cameras whose control rights are not received for a predetermined time period, from among the predetermined plurality of video cameras, if the control rights of the predetermined plurality of video cameras are issued to one computer terminal by said issuing [means] device.

11. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, further comprising:
[storage means for storing] a memory which stores a loci of an image pickup direction of the video camera in a memory,

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the video camera on the basis of the loci of the image pickup direction of the video camera, which is stored in said [storage means] memory.

12. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, further comprising:
[storage means for storing] a memory which stores at least one image pickup direction of the video camera in a memory,

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device executes automatic control of the video camera in the at least one image pickup direction stored in said [storage means] memory.

13. (Amended) A camera control system according to claims 12, wherein said [storage means] memory stores an image pickup direction relative to a control position in a range in which the video camera can pick up an image.

14. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 11 or 12, wherein said storage [means] device stores at least one of a zoom magnification, a subject distance and an on/off state of a backlight correction of the video camera, correspondingly with the image pickup direction of the video camera.

15. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, further comprising:
a measuring [means for dividing] device adapted to divide a range of a controllable image pickup direction of the video camera into a plurality of ranges and measuring a time period which elapses when the video camera is being controlled in accordance with a control command from one of the plurality of computer terminals in each of divided ranges,

wherein said [automatic] control [means] device controls an image pickup direction of the video camera within a particular range of the plurality of divided ranges in which particular range a total of the time periods measured by said measuring [means] device is largest.

16. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 8, [further comprising:
video transmitting means for transmitting a video image of the video camera in response to a video transmission request from each of the plurality of computer terminals,]

wherein if automatic control is being executed by said automatic control [means] device, said video transmitting [means] device transmits video signals from the predetermined plurality of video cameras to a computer terminal which has made the video transmission request, while changing over the video signals at intervals of a predetermined time period.

17. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 4, further comprising:
[video transmitting means for transmitting a video image of the video camera in response to a video transmission request from each of the plurality of computer terminals;]
a counting [means for counting] device adapted to count at least one of the number of times by which the control right has been issued to each of a predetermined plurality of video cameras by said issuing [means] device, the number of times by which a request to acquire the control right of each of the predetermined plurality of video cameras has been received from the plurality of computer terminals, and the number of times by which said video transmitting [means] device has transmitted a video image from each of the predetermined plurality of video cameras to the plurality of computer terminals; and
a changeover [means for controlling] device adapted to control changeover time periods of outputting of video signals of the predetermined plurality of video cameras, on the basis of the number of times counted by said counting [means] device,
wherein if automatic control is being executed by said [automatic] control [means] device, said video transmitting [means] device changes over the video images from the predetermined plurality of video cameras on the basis of the changeover time periods controlled by said changeover [means] device and outputs a video image to a computer terminal which has made the video transmission request.

18. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 17, wherein said changeover [means] device controls the changeover time periods of outputting of the video signals of the predetermined plurality of video cameras in proportion to the number of times counted by said counting [means] device.

19. (Amended) A camera control system comprising:

a control [means for controlling] device adapted to control a video camera;

an automatic control [means for executing] device adapted to execute automatic control of the video camera if a control command for the video camera is not received from a computer terminal;

a plurality of computer terminals for enabling said control [means] device to output the control command for the video camera via a network; and

said video camera controlled by said control [means] device.